

# SWVTC UPDATE



## From the Director

By Dale Woods, Ed. D.

As the holidays approach I wanted to take the opportunity to thank each of you for the work you do in providing services for persons with intellectual disabilities in Southwest Virginia. The work you do is critically important in ensuring that every citizen is afforded opportunities to fully participate in the life of his or her community.

The past year has been one of challenges and opportunities for all of us as we have tried to learn new and improved strategies for service delivery. We had a deficiency free ICF/MR survey this year, always a welcome affirmation of the work that you do. We also learned how much further we have to travel in order to fully implement the principles of a person centered approach with the people we serve. We have seen the completion of the refurbishing of the infrastructure of our buildings and are beginning to appreciate the improvements that were made as well as the wonderful work our buildings and grounds department has done in getting the campus back to its preconstruction condition.

As we all know from following the news, the national and state economy is a major concern facing the Commonwealth and we will most certainly be affected here at SWVTC. So far we have been able to achieve savings without an impact on services and I am confident that we will continue to be able to do that because of the dedication and hard work of our employees. I hope that you and your families have a wonderful Thanksgiving and Christmas and know that we will be up to whatever challenges we face in the coming New Year.

# Commonwealth of Virginia 2009 Pay and Holiday Calendar

## January

## February

## March

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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## April

## May

## June

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## July

## August

## September

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## October

## November

## December

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13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

January 1 - New Year's Day  
January 2 - State Offices Closed  
January 16 - Lee-Jackson Day  
January 19 - Martin Luther King, Jr. Day  
February 16 - George Washington Day  
May 25 - Memorial Day  
July 3 - Independence Day  
September 7 - Labor Day  
October 12 - Columbus Day  
November 11 - Veterans Day  
November 25 - Close At Noon  
November 26 - Thanksgiving  
November 27 - Day After Thanksgiving  
December 24 - State Offices Closed  
December 25 - Christmas

Please note: In some agencies, the holiday and payday schedule may vary from what is shown here. If you have questions, see your agency human resources officer.

Denotes Payday

Denotes Holiday

Denotes Additional  
Time Off

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**dhrm**  
Virginia Department of  
HUMAN RESOURCE  
MANAGEMENT

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# SWVTC STAFF CHRISTMAS SOCIAL 2008

*A Christmas to Remember*



DECEMBER 10, 2008

BUILDING 9 GYM

BREAKFAST BY SHONEY'S 7:00AM TO 9:30AM

AFTERNOON RECEPTION 2:00PM TO 4:00PM

BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE  
EMPLOYEE EVENTS COMMITTEE

## SWVTC Recognition Program Includes Community Experiences

By Michele Laird, Risk Manager

I wanted to make you all aware of an opportunity to receive recognition. SWVTC wants to ensure that all Employees are recognized for initiating new community experiences for individuals that live at SWVTC. We feel that it is important to identify and award employees who overcome risk-related barriers to resident community experience. This can be done by using the current Recognition Program. The Compensation plan was changed to allow any person to make a nomination for recognition to award for safety of staff and residents. Any person may nominate an employee.

The Compensation Committee makes recommendation as to whether the award is an individual award or a team award. The Compensation Committee will make the determination as to the value of the award. Any cash awards will be subject to taxation per DHRM Policy 1.20 Employee Recognition Programs.

- Award Choices may not exceed:  
\$120 Cash Bonus  
\$120 Gift Card  
8 hours of leave

Please take the time to make people aware of everyone's hard work. If you know someone who has worked through the challenges and risks related to an activity to ensure that a resident gets to experience something new, please nominate that person. It is important to note that you can go back to July 1, 2008, as long as there is documentation to support the new experience.

**Example:** Jimmy Joe knew that Jane really enjoyed eating Japanese food when it was brought to her by a family member. Jimmy Joe also knows that Jane normally does not do well with large crowds and the only Japanese food restaurant is in the local mall which can be crowded. Jimmy Joe decided that for Jane's birthday, he would like to take Jane to eat one of her favorite foods at the local mall. Jane has never been to a Japanese restaurant or to a mall.

Before the trip, Jimmy Joe discusses his wishes with his Supervisor, Jane's psychologist and the social worker. Jimmy Joe then contacts the supervisor of the mall. Jimmy Joe asks questions regarding the least crowded day, least crowded time, wheelchair accessibility to the Japanese restaurant, and accessibility to the bathrooms. Through this contact, Joe learned that

Tuesdays afternoons are slow and usually less crowded. He learned that the Japanese restaurant is on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor and the north entrance has automatic doors and access to the elevator. Jimmy Joe knows that all the information can be used to help provide fewer challenges and risks for both Jane and Jimmy Joe to take the trip. However, Jimmy Joe decides that for him to provide a safe trip for Jane, he needs to become more familiar with the mall. Jimmy Joe visits the mall on a Tuesday afternoon and uses the north entrance to enter the mall.

Finally before planning the trip, Jimmy Joe talks to Jane. He talks to Jane about what a mall is, how crowded it can be and how it has a Japanese restaurant. He also tells her that he found out Tuesdays can be less crowded and all the other information that he found. He asks Jane if she would be interested in going to eat Japanese food in the mall some day. Jane expressed that she would love to go to a mall and would love to eat at the Japanese restaurant.

## Risk Management Presents Safety Awards

By Michele Laird

Congratulations to the staff and residents of living areas 3B, 3D and 6D! All were presented with the 1<sup>st</sup> Safety Awards of the new fiscal year. This was for the July 1, 2008 to August 31, 2008 reporting period. We still have 3 quarters remaining, so keep up the good work and stay safe.





## Art Club Members Enjoy Artistic Expression

By Deborah Lowe

The art club members have traveled to The Gallery Group and Art Studio, Inc. in Mount Airy, NC each month (with some exceptions) since February of this year. We began with three residents: Hope B., Sandy L., and Kenny D. Later we added David F. and Sarah Beth to the group.

Donna Jackson, Gallery Group Director, is an amazing individual who began the gallery for her son who is intellectually disabled. We've been able to meet and become friends with Donna and her son, Ben. We even got to have lunch with them during one of our trips. We enter the art studio each month greeted by hugs and a warm welcome from all the staff and volunteers there. Our individuals from the Training Center have learned that The Gallery Group art studio is a safe and happy place where they get to paint and play, create beautiful works of art, and enjoy being with friends.

In May, artist Frankie Denton, a volunteer of The Gallery Group, specifically requested to work with individuals from SWVTC because of a special interest due to a family member with Down's syndrome. She took the time to observe an art teacher of intellectually disabled individuals in the Winston-Salem, NC schools before bringing those ideas to the individuals from the Training Center. She taught a series of three classes during the month of May. The artwork created as a result of those classes is framed and displayed on the walls in Conference Room 2 of SWVTC Building One.

I had the pleasure (after I got over a case of nerves and disorganization) to teach/lead the past two classes. Watching the expressions of pure joy on the faces of these guys as they paint and play in the studio/classroom is one of the greatest opportunities I've had. Seeing their attention span lengthen, their coordination improve, watching as they express their own individual artistic style with concentration, joy, and enthusiasm – there is nothing to compare! Look for the artwork from this class soon. Some will be displayed in the hallway at the main entrance to Building One and some will be made into bookmarks to sell at SWVTC's new store at the Farmer's Market.

Linda Jennings, Case Manager for New Horizon Building 3, accompanied us on the October 24 trip. She caught the vision and the excitement and wants this for New Horizon individuals on Building 3. She and I talked about holding

evening art classes/activities here on campus during the winter months, as we will not be going back to The Gallery Group until after the New Year. I will be glad to work with any staff member on how to incorporate more art into programming and leisure time. I can't personally teach the classes, but I can equip staff with knowledge of basic art concepts and supplies, and working together we can give other individuals at SWVTC the opportunity to make art and express themselves.



*Kenny D. (above) and Hope B. (below) work on abstract creations – acrylic paint applied using sponges and a wooden stamp.*



*Below: A view of the studio/classroom at The Gallery Group*





L-R: Curtis C., Kenny B., Chris R., Randy S., Brett B. (behind Randy), and Timmy B. work hard to package the boxes for the troops.

## SWVTC Cottage 5D Participates in Community Service Project

By Collene Webb, Case Manager

In October and November, individuals from 5D worked on a community service project to send packages to troops serving in the Middle East. On Monday, November 10, Kenny, Chris, Curtis, Timmy, Randy, and Brett helped box the packages containing books, magazines, gum, mints, beef jerky, tissues, crossword puzzles, and personal items donated by several SWVTC employees. One staff member made special cards for the packages and another made home-baked goodies. The group then took a trip to the local post office and mailed several packages for the troops. This project was a rewarding experience for all involved.

Just this week, one SWVTC employee's family member's unit received their care package. It was much appreciated and troop's unit is sending a thank-you card to the gentlemen on 5D. Thanks so much of your support of this special project!

## Staff and Residents of 5C Volunteer at Joy Ranch Children's Home

By Tina Rector

The 5C residents and staff recently had the opportunity to volunteer at The Joy Ranch Children's Home. Sidney Beamer and his 5C crew would venture over to the Ranch three days a week beginning in September clearing off flower beds, moving rocks, pulling weeds, mulching and simple landscaping. In early October, residents from 7C, 8B and 5C assisted in making preparations for the Annual Banquet by setting up tables, chairs and fall decorations. Several residents and staff attended and enjoyed the banquet on October 9th.



Tammy Mabe and Luther attend the Annual Banquet.



Terry admires the beautiful decorations at Joy Ranch Children's Home

## Special Thanks

I would like to extend a thank you to everyone who helped in any way great or small in reaching our goal on The Joy Ranch Children's Home Project. I appreciate the hard work, motivation, donations, patience and team work. Thanks to Bobby in Transportation for accommodating us, Sidney Beamer, Joe Stilwell, Roger Poe and all the staff for their dedication and determination.

Thanks,  
Tina J. Rector



## Building 1 Celebrates Halloween

Photography by Nobel P.



## Special Activities Committee Sponsors Halloween Home Decorating Contest

Winners were: 1<sup>st</sup> Place - 3 C/D; 2<sup>nd</sup> Place - 7C; 3<sup>rd</sup> Place - 7A;  
Honorable Mentions - 8A and 5C. Contest judges were  
Debbie Overfelt, Katie Carter, Pat Lineberry, Olivia Donald,  
and Olga Jewell. Winners received a gift card to Walmart: 1<sup>st</sup> -  
\$30; 2<sup>nd</sup> - \$25; 3<sup>rd</sup> - \$20; and Honorable Mentions - \$10. The  
gift cards were presented in a Halloween Card.



*Special Thanks to  
Nobel P. for the  
wonderful photography!*





## VIDA Program

The Virginia Individual Development Accounts (VIDA) program is a special savings account program that triples your savings: VIDA matches \$2 for every \$1 you save in a VIDA account. Matching funds are limited to \$4000 per participant with a maximum of two participants per household. The savings can be used to:

- Buy your first house
- Start a business
- Save for you, your child's, or your spouse's education (vocational training, community college, undergraduate, or graduate degrees)

In addition to the savings match, participants also receive financial training specific to their savings goal, budget training, and help locating and preparing to purchase their asset.

To be eligible to participate, you must:

- Be a U.S. citizen or legal alien 18 years of age or older residing within Virginia;
- Be employed;
- If saving for a business or education, have a dependent child under the age of 18 living in the household with their parent or guardian;
- Meet income requirements (see below);
- Save a minimum of \$25 per month or more; and
- Be accepted into the program

In order to be eligible to participate in VIDA, individuals must meet income guidelines based on household size. The chart below shows the income levels by household size:

Total # of People in Household	Maximum household income allowed annually	Maximum household income allowed monthly
1	\$20,800	\$1,733
2	\$28,000	\$2,333
3	\$35,200	\$2,933
4	\$42,400	\$3,533
5	\$49,600	\$4,133
6	\$56,800	\$4,733
7	\$64,000	\$5,333
8	\$71,200	\$5,933
9 or more: add this amount to income for each additional person	\$7,200	\$600

These amounts represent 200 percent of the federal poverty limit.

If you live in Galax, Carroll, or Grayson and meet the above qualifications, you can contact Rooftop of Virginia Community Action Program for additional information and assistance. Contact information is:

Ms. Gillespie  
P. O. Box 853  
206 N. Main Street  
Galax, VA 24333  
(276) 236-7131

## 33 UNITS OF BLOOD GIVEN ON 10/16/2008!



### JMH BLOOD DRIVE

Thursday, December 11, 2008  
10 a.m. till 3 p.m.

JMH is the main provider of blood in Smyth, Carroll, and Grayson counties – serving Twin County Regional Hospital and Smyth County Community Hospital.

Check out the CommonHealth Website at [www.commonhealth.virginia.gov](http://www.commonhealth.virginia.gov)

(also located on SWVTC Intranet homepage)



## DSP Career Pathway Program

By Beverly Webb, HR Director

Employees at SWVTC in a Direct Service Associate role have had the opportunity to enroll in the statewide Direct Service Associate Career Pathway since April 1, 2008. Participation in the Pathway is totally voluntary and initiated by the employee. To be eligible for acceptance in the Pathway, the employee must have 12 months of service in a qualified DSA role, have successfully completed the probationary period, have no active written notices, and must have a current performance evaluation rating of contributor or higher.

SWVTC had almost two hundred Direct Service Associates who received a bonus payout in June 2008 because each met the above criteria and had successfully completed the 15 modules of the College of Direct Support that are a part of the Level I requirement of the Pathway by April 15, 2008.

SWVTC has 42 Direct Service Associates who will receive a bonus in December 2008 because they have also met the above criteria and had successfully completed the 15 modules of the College of Direct Support that are a part of the Level I requirement of the Pathway by October 25, 2008. While the bonus for the December payout is significantly smaller than the bonus paid in June, those employees receiving it should be appreciative of the bonus for completing the modules as there will be no more bonuses given for simply doing the 15 modules.

All bonuses awarded after December 2008 associated with the DSP Career Pathway Program will only be awarded for completion of a level in the Pathway. **Employees should remember that there is a budget crisis in the Commonwealth and funding for the DSA Career Pathway is not guaranteed.** At this point in time, each DSA who successfully completes Level 1 by some time in April 2009 (date unknown at this point), should receive a bonus that will be paid out in June 2009.

**Each DSA currently enrolled in the Pathway should try to complete their portfolio by the first of April to ensure that it is reviewed and approved in time to qualify for this bonus.**

## Keeping Up with Coworkers

### *Thank You*

I would like to thank everyone for their prayers and phone calls and the money sent to me while I was sick. The staff at SWVTC is very much appreciated. Miss you all.

**Sue Hall**

Food Service appreciates the three additional parking spaces that were provided to alleviate the need for more parking.

**Rebecca Stone**, Food Service

I would like to thank everyone for all the kindness that was shown to me and my family during the death of **Roxann**. It was greatly appreciated. Thanks for all the kind words, cards, flowers, food, monetary donations, and especially the friendship. Thanks again,

**Bernard Mabe**

The kindness and generosity you showed me at the time of my son's death are much appreciated – the prayers, calls, flowers, cards, money, visits and words of comfort. I am very blessed to have an extended family like SWVTC for support during this sad time.

**Dorothy Carico**

As I prepare to leave SWVTC to reenter the private sector, I offer my heartfelt thanks for the opportunity to have worked side by side with some of the hardest working and most conscientious people I have ever encountered. The quality of care and sincerity provided the residents here is unbelievably strong. All the many different departments focus their actions for resident's best interests. I count my 18 months as a truly enriching and growth-facilitating experience. My farewell wish to all is that good health, good fortune, and true happiness will walk life's path with you always.

**Tom Stout**, Housekeeping

### *Welcome Back after Illness/Injury*

Buildings and Grounds Department welcomes **Perry Nester** back to work. Perry returned to work on Monday, November 24 on light duty.

**Becky Hawkins**, Work Control Center

It may not appear to be the case from the viewpoint of the casual observer, but I may be one of the luckiest people in the western part of Virginia. I have been completely overwhelmed

with the cards, visits, books, magazines, monetary donations, well-wishes and prayers offered to me by the staff and management of SWVTC. I cannot begin to tell you how important these have been in my life over the past two months. When life has only pain and disappointment in the present, a body needs to know that beyond the walls of the hospital there is a life where one is welcomed and valued. Please accept my heart-felt thanks for holding that space for me here at SWVTC. It is truly wonderful to be back among such good friends. My thanks again for all you have done!

Kim Robinette

### *Congratulations*

**April Anders**, Campus Rover, and her husband, Allen, are the new proud parents of a little boy, Trent Austin. He was born November 20th at 2:32pm. He weighed 7 pounds 5 ounces and is 21 inches long. Both mother and son are now doing well. Congratulations!

### *Comings and Goings*

Food Service welcomes two new employees: **Rebecca Rogers** and **Aubrey Monroe**.

Food Service extends best wishes for the future to two staff members who have transferred to Housekeeping: **Sandra Flores** and **Allen Waller**.  
Rebecca Stone, Food Service

Good bye and good luck to **Sandy Reavis** in her new position as Activity Specialist. We will all miss Sandy. Also Welcome **Margaret Bond** to 6A 1<sup>st</sup> shift in Sandy's position we look forward to working with Margaret, I'm sure she will be a great asset to 6A.

Patricia Williams

### *Sympathy*

Our sincere sympathy to the family of **Ralph Vaughn** for the passing of his father-in-law.

Rebecca Stone, Food Service

Our sincere sympathy to **Dennis Shrewsberry** in the death of his mother.

### *Other News*

**Food Service employees** enjoyed a Thanksgiving Social on November 19. Everyone enjoyed the great food and fun.

Rebecca Stone, Food Service

## UPDATE 2009 Publishing Schedule

By Deborah Lowe, Editor

Deadline	Information For
December 31	Issue No. 1 January
January 30	Issue No. 2 February
February 27	Issue No. 3 March
March 31	Issue No. 4 April
April 30	Issue No. 5 May
No June Issue	
June 30	Issue No. 6 July
July 31	Issue No. 7 August
August 31	Issue No. 8 September
September 30	Issue No. 9 October
October 30	Issue No. 10 November
No December Issue	

### *From the Editor...*

*This issue will be the last one for 2008. I hope everyone has a wonderful Thanksgiving and a very Merry Christmas!*

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